THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

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SUE DODGE, EDITOR

Volume 24, Number 4 **Fall 1974**

New Projects 4
A review of projects begun in recent months

The Little Egg Harbor Story 8
Preservation of a New Jersey wetland

Past and Present at Santee Coastal Reserve 11
Conservancy receives gift of over 23,000 acres of superb South Carolina marshland

Sandy River Gorge 18
Semi-wilderness area on Portland's doorstep

Ecology Forum: An Opportunity for Preserving Ecological Diversity 21

Notes 22

PHOTOGRAPHS: Barbara Dodge, cover; Duncan Heron, p. 4, inside back cover; Gerald Lieberman, pp. 8, 10; Tim Loomis, inside front cover, pp. 6, 7; Oregon Scenic Waterways Commission, pp. 17-19; South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, pp. 11-16.

LAND CONSERVATION THROUGH PRIVATE ACTION

The Nature Conservancy is the only national conservation organization, receiving its support from the public, whose resources are devoted to the preservation of ecologically and environmentally significant land.

Some 700,117 acres of forests, swamps, marshes, prairies, mountains, beaches, and islands in 1,225 projects throughout the United States, have been saved from destruction by the Conservancy since the acquisition of its first preserve in 1954.

The Nature Conservancy works in three ways to protect threatened natural areas: by purchase of land with funds raised through public subscription, by acceptance of donations of land, and by advance acquisition of land for local, state, and federal governments.

A member-governed non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

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NEW PROJECTS

California

FAIRFIELD-OSBORN SANCTUARY—Addition—(Sonoma County). 15 acres are a third gift of Mr. & Mrs. William M. Roth, bringing the total to 46 acres. The preserve features two ponds and a stream fed by three springs as well as a stand of mature California live oak and California laurel. An adjoining 119 acres are leased to the Conservancy.

MILL VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH PROPERTY (Marin County). 22 acres include a large and beautiful grassy knoll which serves as a scenic backdrop to Mill Valley. The tract will be conveyed to the City of Mill Valley for use as open space.

Connecticut

CHURCH HILL PRESERVE (Litchfield County). The 23-acre property is situated on a north-facing hill and includes approximately 9 acres of marsh at the foot of the hill. The upland portion is reverting farmland with red maple, ironwood, gray and white birch, and beech trees. The Connecticut Chapter purchased the area with funds donated by Mr. Tate Brown. The tract has been transferred to the Steep Rock Association, a local land trust, which will maintain it as a natural area.

MESSENGER PRESERVE (Hartford County). The 144-acre wooded tract includes three streams and the watersheds of two of them. White-tailed deer, bobcats, and black bears are often seen here, as well as otters, beavers, mink and other small mammals. Vegetation includes the rarely found Hartford fern. A gift of Mrs. Edna Messenger, the tract will be managed by the Connecticut Chapter.

GENSBURG-MARKHAM PRAIRIE—Additions—(Cook County). Two tracts totaling approximately 1 acre were purchased by the Illinois Chapter for addition to this prairie located on the glacial lake plain just south of Chicago. The entire prairie preserve is scheduled for ultimate transfer to and management by Northeastern Illinois University.

HART MEMORIAL WOODS—S. Charles Kendeigh Addition—(Champaign County). The 4-acre property fronts on the Sagamon River and is primarily a floodplain and an upland bluff woodland of oak and maple. The tract is named in tribute to Dr. S. Charles Kendeigh, distinguished ecologist of the University of Illinois. The area will be leased to the University of Illinois, and managed by the Illinois Chapter and the university.

Illinois

PRAIRIE GROUSE PRESERVE—Burridge D. Butler Sanctuary—(Marion County). The Prairie Grouse Committee of the Illinois Chapter purchased a 160-acre addition to the system of sanctuaries for the threatened prairie grouse. The purchase, begun in 1969, was recently completed when the last mortgage payment was made. The Illinois Natural History Survey has managed the area since 1969 and will continue to do so.

Kentucky

MURPHEY'S POND — Addition — (Hickman County). 75 acres contain high ground surrounding Murphey's Pond Preserve, an area containing a cypress swamp and a spring-fed lake and pond. The entire preserve will be transferred to and managed by Murray State University.

Maryland

CHADWICK PROPERTY (Frederick and Montgomery Counties). In cooperation with the State of Maryland, the Conservancy purchased 729 acres at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain. The area includes two miles of frontage on the Monocacy River, about 400 acres of mixed hardwood forest, and a trout stream. The property will be transferred to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for use as a state park.

Michigan

HOLLOWAY RESERVOIR—Additions—(Genesee and Lapeer Counties). 14 separate tracts totaling 122 acres were purchased by the Conservancy. The forested area contains an exceptional number of plant species due to the presence of varied soil types.

Minnesota

KATHARINE ORDWAY PRAIRIE—Addition —(Pope County). The 80-acre grassland was purchased to help stabilize the southern boundary of the Ordway Prairie which slopes so steeply that it is prone to erosion. The prairie on glacial morainal hills supports little bluestem, sideoats grama, and porcupine grass; trees include dogwood, willow, cottonwood, and prickly ash. Management of the area is the responsibility of the Minnesota Chapter, and funds for the purchase were provided by Miss Katharine Ordway.

WILD RIVER STATE PARK—Saxe Tracts—(Chisago County). Two tracts totaling 160 acres adjacent to Wild River State Park were purchased on behalf of the State of Minnesota. The property, which consists of abandoned fields and young woodland, had been slated for immediate development into 5-acre home sites. Both tracts are scheduled for transfer to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the state park, which fronts the St. Croix River, a national Wild and Scenic River.

Missouri

THORESON PRAIRIE II (Cedar County). A remnant of the unglaciated prairies of southwest Missouri, the 240-acre area contains shallow prairie, upland prairie, loamy, and claypan sites. Vegetation consists of typical upland prairie grasses, forbs and legumes, and prairie chickens are found on the area. Funds for the purchase were provided by Miss Katharine Ordway.

New Hampshire

THE GREAT ROUNDABOUT (Rockingham County). A gift of Paul and Anne Molloy, the property fronts an oxbow of the Squamscott River. The 3-acre tract contains a cattail and spartina marsh and a wooded upland. The area represents the first in a planned series of estuarine acquisitions.

New Jersey

LITTLE EGG HARBOR (Atlantic County). 3,855 acres consist of wooded upland and lowland, swamp, and large areas of tidal marsh. Located directly on the path of the Atlantic Flyway bird migratory route, the area provides habitat for many species throughout the year. In addition to birds typical of the New Jersey pine barrens and swamps, such species as acadian flycatcher, ruffed grouse, broad wing hawk, yellow billed cuckoo and hairy woodpecker have been observed. Black duck and several species of heron are common in the marsh areas. The area will be transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for inclusion in Barnegat National Wildlife Refuge. See article beginning on page 8.

New York

CANADAWAY CREEK NATURE SANCTUARY — Addition — (Chautauqua County). 15 acres purchased by the Western New York Chapter include frontage on both sides of willow-lined Canadaway Creek. The Sanctuary is on a major flyway and during spring and fall many migrant birds stop here to feed and rest. 140 species of birds have been identified in the area. The chapter will assume management responsibility.

CLAY MARSH—Grimble Tract—(Onandaga County). 157 acres include part of the last major cattail marsh in Onondaga County. The entire marsh covers about 1,500 acres, a major portion

of which the State of New York is in the process of acquiring; the Town of Clay hopes to acquire the remaining 370 acres with the help of the Conservancy. The Grimble tract, the first purchase in this program, is to be conveyed to the Town of Clay Parks Department for management.

North Carolina

ENO RIVER—Addition—(Durham County). Mature oak-beech woodland slopes down to the edge of the river. Hepatica, bloodroot and trout lily are some of the many wildflowers found on the 13-acre property. The purchase is part of the Conservancy's program to assist the state in acquiring lands along a 20-mile stretch of the Eno.

—Addition—(Orange County). 4 acres on a high bluff near Cabes Ford provide a view across the Eno to Cox's Mountain. Vegetation consists of second growth hardwood forest and a variety of wildflowers. Wildlife includes deer, rabbit, opossum, raccoon, and squirrels, and the threatened Roanoke bass is found in the Eno River adjacent to this section. The Eno River Committee will manage the area until it is transferred to the State of North Carolina for inclusion in the proposed Eno River State Park.

Ohio

KNISS NATURE PARK (Summit County). Approximately one-third of the 73-acre tract consists of superb mixed woodland including beech, sugar maple, white and red oak, dogwood, basswood, black walnut, American elm, and sour gum. The remaining two-thirds contains open fields in various successional stages. The property, a gift of Mr. and Victor D. Kniss, has been conveyed to the Akron Metropolitan Park District for use in outdoor education programs.

Oregon

LAWRENCE MEMORIAL GRASSLANDS PRESERVE (Wasco County). The property is a good example of the geologic formation known as biscuit scabland and contains an excellent species mix of native grasses, sedges, and shrubs. The 390-acre area is considered to be one of the best examples of relatively undisturbed rangeland in central Oregon. Funds for purchase and management of the tract were provided by Donald B. and William C. Lawrence as a memorial to their parents, William C. and Louise B. Lawrence.

Rhode Island

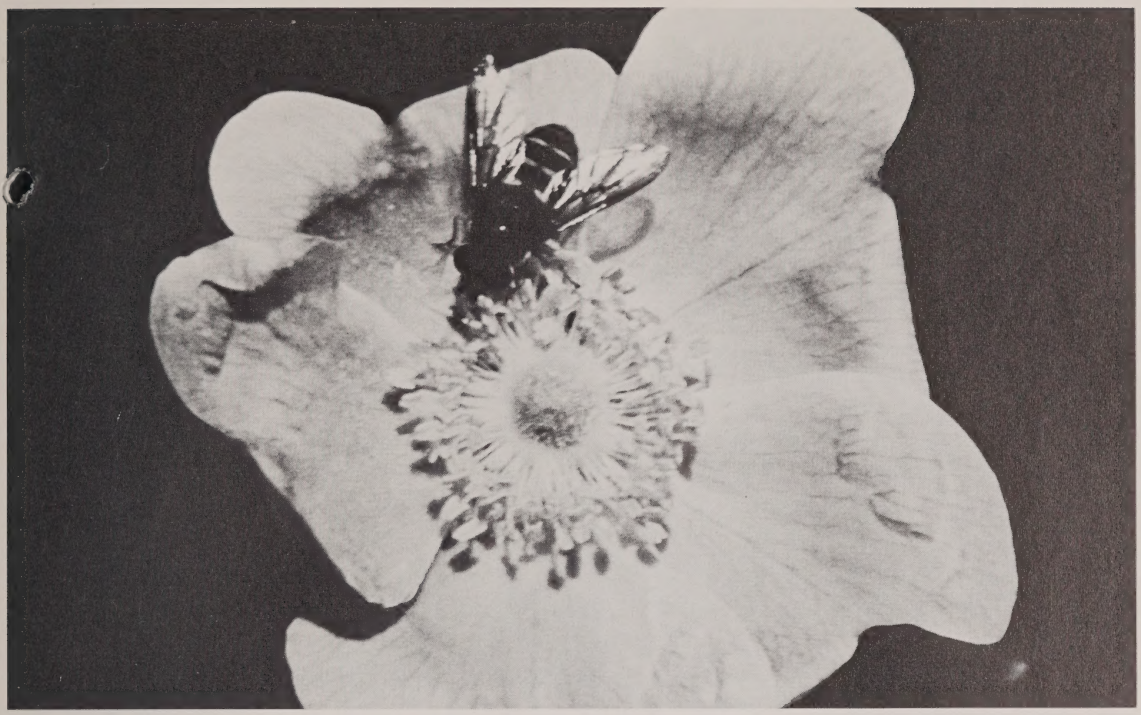
ELL POND—Berrie Tract—(Washington County). 115 acres are within an area identified by the Rhode Island Natural Areas Survey as high priority for preservation. The property contains large rock outcroppings adjacent to Long Pond; vegetation is mostly hemlock with an abundant understory of rhododendron. The granite promontories support an assemblage of plants adapted to a dry environment, including such relatively rare species as trailing arbutus and kinnikinic. The Rhode Island Audubon Society and the Conservancy are seeking funds for the purchase.

South Carolina

SANTEE COASTAL RESERVE (Georgetown and Charleston Counties). 23,024 acres of salt, brackish, and fresh water marshes, cypress swamps, Atlantic beaches, and upland with live oak and Spanish moss, were donated to the Conservancy by members of the Santee Club. The area contains the oldest known egret rookery, and the southern bald eagle and the American alligator, both endangered species, inhabit the preserve. An additional 753 acres were donated by John T. Dorrance, Jr. See story beginning on page 11.

Virginia

E. L. BOYCE ESTATE (Surry County). The 26-acre purchase provides buffer to the adjacent Carlisle tract, an area owned and managed by the State of Virginia. The Conservancy will transfer the



property to the state for management by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

CEDAR ISLAND—Additions—(Accomack County). A checkerboard of 105 lots totaling approximately 17 acres includes frontage on both the Atlantic Ocean and Burtons Bay. The property, composed of salt marsh and sand dunes, provides habitat for sea and shore birds, as well as a variety of small mammals, crustaceans and insects. Funds for the purchase were provided by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust.

MASON NECK—Additions—(Fairfax County). Two contiguous tracts totaling 69 acres were purchased on behalf of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The land is surrounded on three sides by Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, set aside as a sanctuary for the American bald eagle. The oak and pine forested tracts are top priority acquisitions for the Fish & Wildlife Service.

POWELL TRACT (Prince William County). In a cooperative effort with the Town of Manassas Park, the Conservancy acquired 92 acres for inclusion in a proposed regional park. The property was the site of a major event in the Civil War, and lies adjacent to Signal Hill, another historic area previously acquired by the Conservancy for the Town of Manassas Park. The tract will be transferred to and managed by the Town.

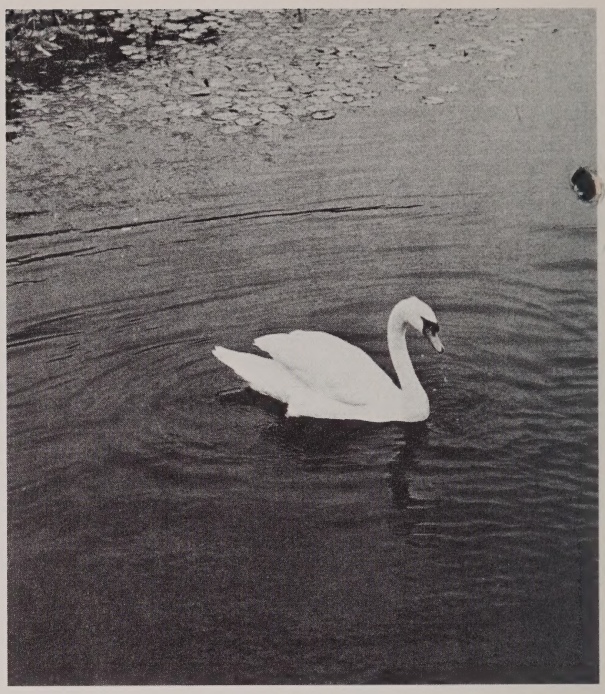
Washington

PROTECTION ISLAND RHINOCEROS AUKLET COLONY (Jefferson County). 48 acres occupy the west end of the island off the coast from Port Townsend. A nesting colony of rhinoceros auklets inhabits the rocky shores, as do harlequin ducks, scoters, and seals. The island has been platted for development, and many lots have already been sold; the west end was purchased to protect the colony from further encroachment. The Conservancy will transfer the property to the Washington Department of Game.

WALDRON ISLAND — Addition — (San Juan County). With the purchase of an additional 57 acres, the Waldron Island preserve of white sand beaches, marshes, lakes, and evergreen and hardwood forests now totals 273 acres. Located in the San Juan Islands of Puget Sound, the island attracts seals, otters, bald eagles, and numerous shore and sea birds.

Wyoming

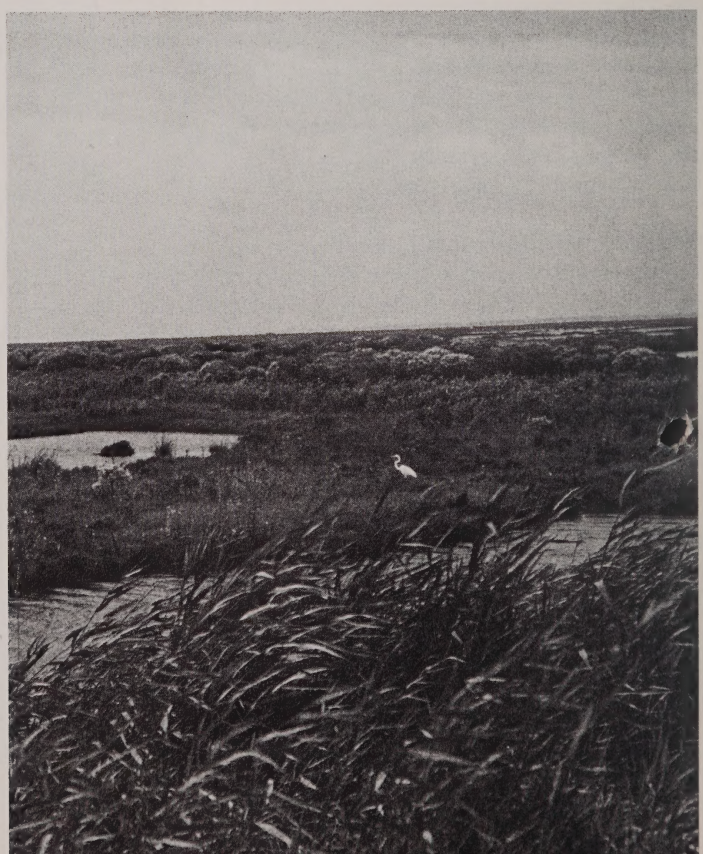
JACKSON ELK REFUGE—Addition—(Teton County). The property is a crucial inholding in National Elk Refuge, an area which provides winter habitat for 7-9,000 elk. The 5-acre tract is to be conveyed to and managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



THE LITTLE EGG HARBOR STORY

by Thomas A. Todd and Michael G. Clarke

In September The Nature Conservancy transferred 3,855 acres of New Jersey marsh and swamp lands to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and in so doing, assured the retention of a portion of New Jersey's great natural resources. That event brought to a close a 12-month effort involving an unusual combination of people.



New Jersey's 120-mile coastline, characterized by long, sandy barrier islands protecting shallow estuaries and salt marshes, lies adjacent to the immense metropolitan areas of Philadelphia and New York. The combined population of these areas approaches 20 million people. When the state's ocean front islands were almost entirely developed as vacation and recreation sites for these populations during the post World War II period, pressures to develop the estuarine area ensued. Development pressure continues unabated.

The State of New Jersey, recognizing the immense biological importance of its estuaries and wetlands, enacted a wetlands protection law in 1972. And now, the momentum of development pressure is testing its legal validity.

The Lincoln Property Company, a Dallas-based national residential developer, had acquired several thousand acres of marsh and swamp land in the Little Egg Harbor area at about the time of the enactment of the New Jersey Wetlands Act. Acknowledging the new concern for the marsh areas and hoping to recoup its investment, Lincoln Property undertook development which would minimize the negative ecological and aesthetic impacts typical of such developments in the past. It was hoped that such a concerned effort would meet with approval of the New Jersey State Environmental Protection Agency, responsible for administering the Wetlands Act.

Lincoln Property hired Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd (WMRT), Architects and Planners of Philadelphia, to assist them in preparing a development plan for the tract. WMRT's work focused on the question of what (if any) part of the property was actually developable, with the basic assumption that no significant negative environmental impacts should result from the development. To determine what those impacts might be, a thoughtful study of the ecosystem of this particular segment of marsh/swamp was undertaken.

Shortly after initiating the study, WMRT realized that existing environmental data were inadequate and that additional field studies would be necessary. Thomas Lloyd, a water resource planner, was asked to examine the estuarine functions of the property's marshes to determine the extent of their contribution to the ecosystem of the Little Egg Harbor estuary. Frank Gill, Chairman of the Department of Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, was employed to research the kinds and relative abundance of birds frequenting the property's marshes and swamps. Lucien Brush, a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University and an expert in the hydraulic workings of marshes, sampled various parts of the site for salinity levels and other physical and chemical characteristics of the waters flowing into and out of the estuary. WMRT staff members Carol Reifsnyder and Leslie Sauer, both with considerable field experience in vegetation mapping, made a botanical survey of a portion of the property for which no botanical data existed.

By the third month of the study, sufficient work had been completed to determine the great value of this section of New Jersey's coastal zone.

The property's eastern edge fronts on the Little Egg Harbor estuary. A large portion of the land consists of Spartina marsh (*S. patens* and *alterniflora*) which, in spite of being ditched several decades ago, is functioning well. The field studies showed that it acts as a spawning and nursery ground for many fish, crustaceans, and other aquatic life. It contributes detritus to the estuary—an important food source for many of its inhabitants. The marshes are also an important resting and nesting area for many shorebirds.

Behind the marshes are cedar and hardwood swamps. Reifsnyder and Sauer found them to be largely undisturbed and botanically exceptional in New Jersey's coastal zone. They counted an unusually high number of species of herbs, shrubs and trees. These particular swamps contain such a diversity of plant species that they could be considered a significant "gene pool", serving to produce new generations of plants—a key point in view of the destruction of New Jersey's natural environment in the post-war years.

The studies conducted by WMRT revealed that not only was this particular marsh area one of the finest, largest and least tampered with in ecological terms in the entire 120-mile stretch of New Jersey coastline, but that *any* development of the marsh and swamp areas would destroy the ecosystem of the areas left undeveloped. The marsh area comprises about 2/3 of the total area of the tract. Careful studies showed that *some* of the remaining hardwood freshwater swamp areas (as distinguished from salt marsh) could be developed without unduly impacting the ecosystem. This was, however, a far cry from the amount of land required to be developed by Lincoln Property in order to regain its investment.

The study findings, presented to Lincoln Property, gave the developer few options. It could proceed to attempt to develop the land in a way which would both recoup its investment and minimize ecosystems damage; it could simply hold the land in-

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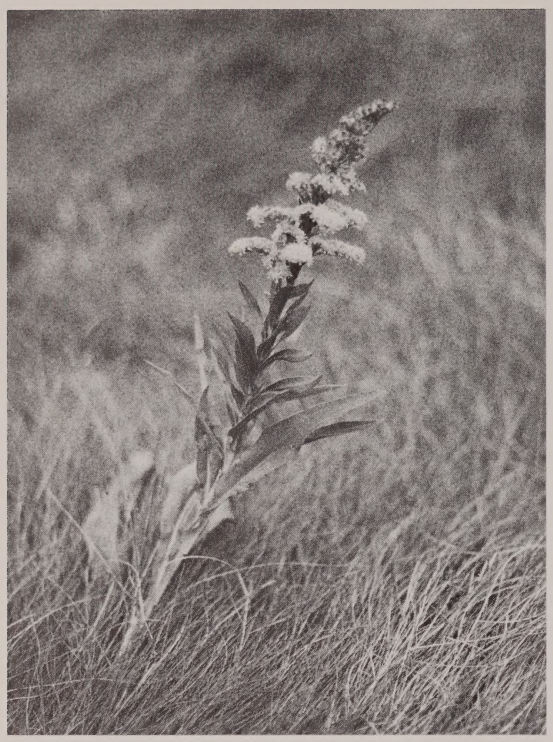
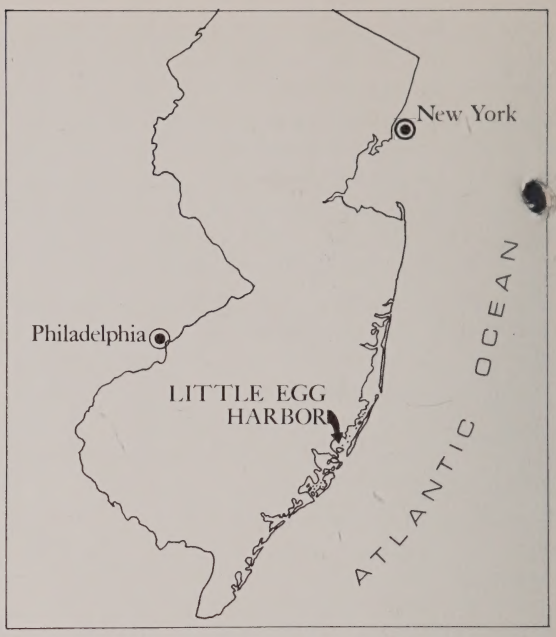
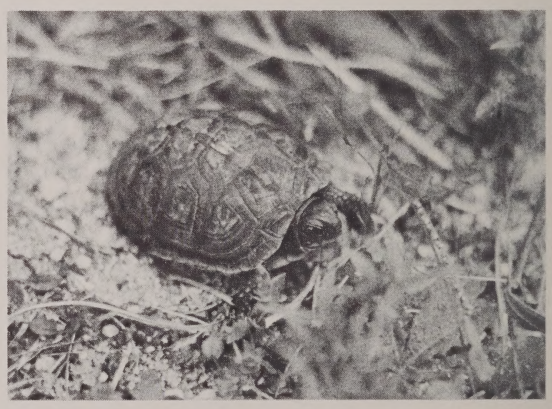
Mr. Todd is a Partner of Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd, Architects, Landscape Architects, Urban and Ecological Planners, located in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Mr. Clarke is a Senior Associate Partner of the same firm.





Left, seaside goldenrod blooms; eastern box turtle, below, is a resident of Little Egg.



definitely; it could make a gift to the state; or it could find a buyer who would agree to keep the land in its natural state.

All of these alternatives were difficult. The first would probably involve many years of litigation and the tough opposition of conservation groups. The second would tie up capital for an unacceptably long period of time and would serve no purpose. The third would involve a tremendous capital loss which would be too much even for a multimillion dollar firm. The fourth was difficult because there are few such buyers.

At this point WMRT suggested contacting Brad Northrup, the Conservancy's Eastern Regional Vice President, to see if the Conservancy would act as "middle man" or as a "clearing house" for possible conservation-minded buyers. Lincoln Property agreed, and WMRT met with The Nature Conservancy who sent representatives to look over the property. The Conservancy found the area to be everything WMRT said it was, and opened negotiations directly with Lincoln Property. After some weeks, the developer agreed to sell 3,855 acres at less than fair market value. Funds for the purchase were made available to the Conservancy through a loan provided by the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. The Fish and Wildlife Service, in turn, purchased the area for inclusion in the adjacent Barnegat National Wildlife Refuge.

The result is that a large and irreplaceable tract of salt marsh and swamp has been preserved through a unique partnership between a private landowner, a planning consultant, a large financial institution, The Nature Conservancy and the federal government. The particular beneficiaries of this partnership have been both the developer and the general public. The public has benefited because a large tract important to the ecosystem of the Atlantic seaboard has remained open. The developer has benefited because his remaining property is enhanced in value as a result of the adjacent property remaining as a permanently undeveloped wildlife preserve. His losses, if any, have been minimized through the good offices of The Nature Conservancy and Equitable Life Assurance Society and, most important, he has performed a major public service by helping to preserve this superb piece of salt marsh.

PAST AND PRESENT AT SANTEE COASTAL RESERVE

by John V. Dennis

When it was announced on June 26 of this year that the Santee Club had donated its vast holdings at the mouth of the Santee River in South Carolina to The Nature Conservancy, conservationists were jubilant and with good reason. This was one more eloquent testimony to the fact that, in many cases, protection of wildlife and the environment was beginning to take priority over other land uses. The Santee Club, a group of sportsmen who owned this valuable property, could have asked a fabulous price. The 23,024 acres that comprised its holdings contain everything a developer could wish for. Here was room for condominiums, yacht basins, and golf courses—all this in a setting of huge live oaks, ocean beaches, and vistas across miles of marsh. But the club members, as they always have in the past, put the public interest first. Instead of thinking in terms of the twenty million dollars, which, according to some experts, was the worth of the property, they magnanimously donated the whole to the Conservancy. The gift is believed to be the most valuable ever made to the cause of conservation.

In Blake's Reserve, ospreys build their nests at the tops of dead cypress snags.

To me the news was almost too good to be true. The South Carolina low country, from the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge to Huntington State Park near Myrtle Beach, is where I usually go when I take up the life of a naturalist in the south. This is an incredibly rich area for plants and wildlife.

Although habitat in this region has been protected for a long time through large public and private holdings, the ecology is surprisingly fragile. As is true of the Everglades of southern Florida, the distinctive animal and plant life depends upon proper amounts of fresh water. The key to fresh water in the low lying coastal regions of this part of South Carolina is the drainage that comes from such large rivers as the Santee and Pee Dee. The early rice planters realized the importance of these rivers as suppliers of fresh water that is so essential for the cultivation of rice. Prior to the Civil War the Carolina low country was a quiltwork of rice fields. The canals, ditches, and dikes needed for rice culture were maintained by slave labor. That rice culture was enormously profitable as seen in the many beautiful ante-bellum homes that, in spite of the ravages of war and time, still exist in the low country. One of the most successful of the early planters was Joseph Blake who owned 900 slaves and 25,000 acres in the lower Santee. His lands comprise much of the holdings recently deeded over by the Santee Club. His rice fields were said to have earned him as much as $250,000 in one season.

So far as waterfowl and large wading birds were concerned, the water impoundments used in rice culture were of inestimable value. Even during the days of intensive land use preceding the Civil War, the Santee delta was a paradise for waterfowl. We know from early accounts that vast numbers of geese and ducks fed in the rice fields during darkness and then retired to safer open water during the day.

Reservoirs where fresh water was stored, known as reserves and usually bordered by cypress and other water-loving trees, were ideal rookeries for large wading birds and havens for other wildlife as well. In April of 1823, a reporter for the Charleston Courier visited Blake's Reserve, which later was to be included within the Santee Club's holdings, and described what he saw. "At this season," he wrote, "the largest alligators may be seen

on every dead log, and in the tops of the trees the great American herons, white cranes and fish hawks have built their nests. . . . In this magnificent repository the naturalist, who has obtained the proprietor's permission, will find ample field for his researches."

During the days following the Civil War, many of the plantations were abandoned and the impoundments and ditches connected with rice culture fell into disrepair. But in the face of enormous odds, planters once again began the task of restoring the rice industry. For a time it seemed as though they would succeed. However, competition from a newly established industry in Texas, Arkansas and other more western states was too great. The Carolina rice growing regions suffered both from hurricanes and vast flocks of bobolinks and other rice-eating birds. By 1900 another use had been found for the diked lowland marshes: sportsmen had discovered their value as hunting preserves. The Santee Club, or "Santee Gun Club," as it was popularly known, was one of several hunting clubs that became established in the lowlands around 1900. The Santee Club was incorporated in 1898 and a club house, not far from Blake's Reserve, was built in 1905. Over the years the club gradually expanded its holdings from several thousand acres to its recent 23,024 acres. Of the acreage held at the time the property was deeded to The Nature Conservancy, about 18,500 was in marshland and 4,500 in upland timber.

One of the early club members was President Grover Cleveland. Membership in the club never exceeded thirty and game laws were strictly adhered to. In reading accounts of the hunting routine that was established, I am impressed by the restraint that members showed in the face of what was often overwhelming plenty. In the early days of the club, there were to be sure no bag limits imposed by either state or federal governments. With the enactment of federal regulations in 1916, members began to adhere strictly to bag limits and other limitations. The club also had regulations of its own. If anything, the rules that members imposed upon themselves were stricter than those prescribed by state or federal law. Some parts of the preserve, including cypress-bordered Blake's Reserve, were never hunted.

Members also showed a concern for non-game birds. Around 1900, Blake's Reserve contained probably the largest wading bird rookery in the east. Although it was a constant fight to ward off poachers, the club did maintain this rookery during the grim days when the plume trade was still threatening some of the most beautiful of our birds. The fact that the egrets did not go the way

Santee Heritage

At a stroke of the pen, some 25,000 acres of coastal marshland rich in wildlife, history and natural beauty have been spared potential exploitation and instead marked forever as a heritage for future generations of South Carolinians and all Americans. For this remarkable transaction, the beneficiaries can thank the Santee Club, a group of sportsmen who donated the tract valued at $20 million to the Nature Conservancy, which has assumed its ownership and management, and South Carolina's government, acting through its new Heritage Trust Program.

One of the most valuable single gifts made in the interests of American conservation—almost comparable to the Rockefeller gifts of entire national parks—this great segment of the Santee River area northeast of Charleston has long been eyed by public and private wildlife agencies aware of its natural wealth. Much of it planted to rice in the last century, the tract now includes marshland ranging from freshwater in the west to salt marsh along the coast, a variation reflected in its birds and animals. Here is a haven for some of the country's most endangered species—the alligator, the Southern bald eagle and the large sea turtle. Here, too, is the nation's oldest egret rookery and the habitat of the osprey, white ibis and heron.

Whether the Nature Conservancy—a unique conservation organization established for the purpose of holding strategic tracts of land of especial environmental or ecological interest—eventually turns the Santee preserve over to the state or administers the tract itself, Gov. John C. West did not exaggerate in describing the acquisition as "an accomplishment which is truly historical in magnitude."

The example should not be lost on his state's northern neighbor, which has been allowing foreign companies to invest, at bargain prices, in its wetlands, with the objective of draining them for cultivation and the raising of cattle. With all the available knowledge of the role of marshes in the life cycle of both birds and fish, surely no one at this late date—in North Carolina or any other coastal state—can confuse wetland with wasteland.

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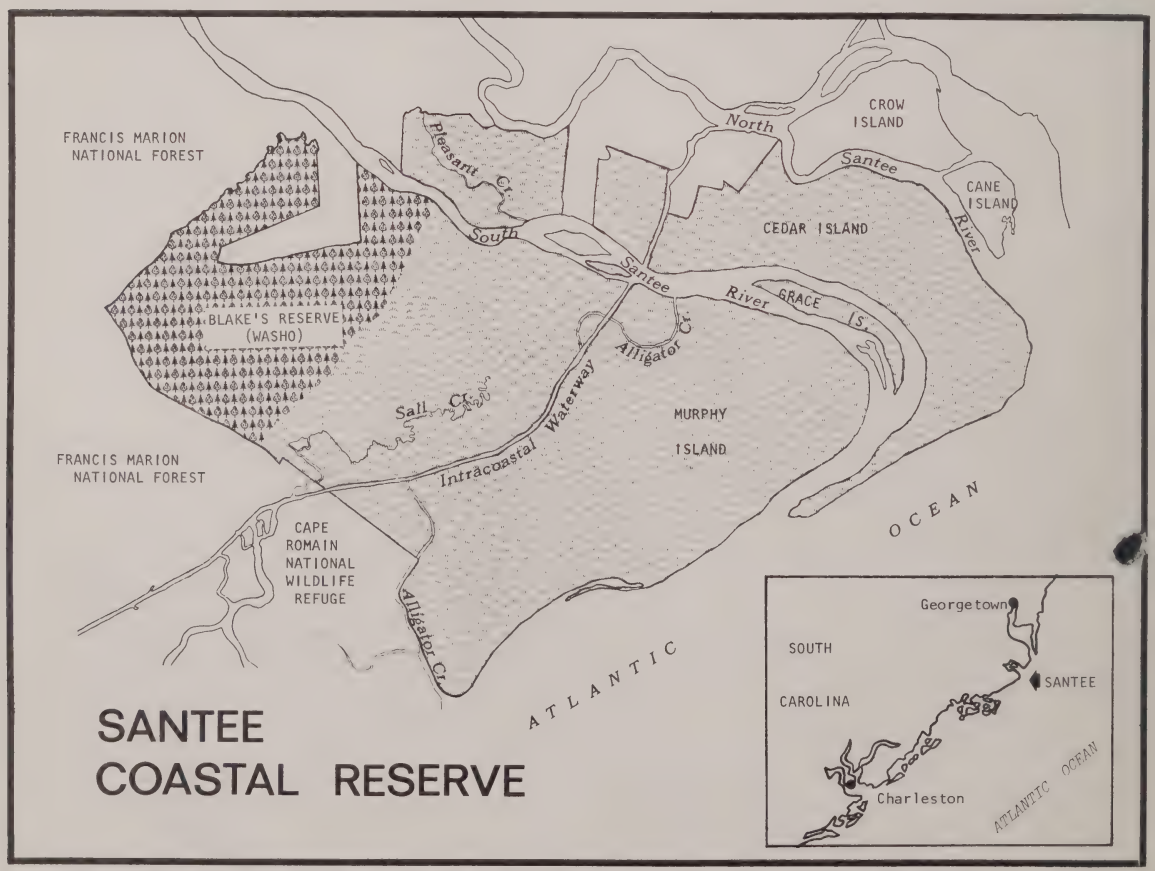
of the passenger pigeon and Carolina parakeet was in no small measure due to the efforts of the Santee Club.

During the dust bowl years of the 1930's, waterfowl were facing much the same precarious future as had the egrets and other plume birds of 30 to 40 years earlier. This meant less shooting for members of the Santee Club. Another temporary casualty was the Wilson's snipe. During the winter of 1940-1941, a severe freeze in the Gulf states resulted in heavy mortality among the wintering snipe population. The bird had always been a favorite target for Santee Club gunners. But with the heavy losses came a 12-year ban on snipe shooting by the federal government.

As distressing as were these declines among game birds, no event during this period was more foreboding than the damming of the Santee River by funneling it into the more southerly Cooper River. As a consequence, the great marshes at the mouth of the Santee had by 1941 lost much of the freshness so vital to the production of waterfowl foods. Maintaining the waterfowl impoundments became a more difficult and expensive task for the Santee Club and other shooting clubs in this region. Nevertheless, the Santee Club met this challenge by building more dikes and strengthening old ones. When the property was deeded to the Conservancy, no less than 100 miles of dikes in a good state of repair were in existence.

The past was overwhelmingly present, and seemed to pervade the marshes, cypress swamps, and pine woods, when in late August I met my guide, William Cody, who, for twelve years, had been the manager of the Santee Club. There wasn't a particular I asked about that wasn't known to Mr. Cody, and about which he couldn't talk with feeling and at length. My admiration for Mr. Cody changed to awe when I discovered that he was the grandson of Buffalo Bill Cody, Indian scout, pony express rider, and showman. But I wanted to see as much of the Santee tract for myself as was possible in two days.

My tour began with a boat trip down the South Santee River to a point where ocean and river meet. Here I could see the Cape Romain lighthouse far to the south. Sandy beaches faced the ocean as far as I could see in either direction—not a house or building anywhere, only vast marshes, beaches, and a low growth of pine and red cedar on slightly higher ground that marked the dunelines of past periods in geological time. I then real-



Among Santee's abundant wildlife are the mallard, left, and the opossum, above.

ized more fully than ever that my isolation and that of the wildlife around me was due not only to the existence of the Santee Club tract but also because this land was protected on one side by the ocean and on every other side by lands being managed for wildlife. To the south were the seemingly endless marshes of the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, to the west the Francis Marion National Forest, and to the north other shooting preserves such as Kinloch Plantation. The Santee tract was the mortar that held these other great preserves in place and guarded their sanctity. Without Santee, the whole might cave in like ancient masonry.

I turned from the empty beaches—the realm of gulls, terns, shorebirds, brown pelicans, and, in early summer, the nesting place of loggerhead sea turtles—and faced the marshes. At this season, there were almost no waterfowl in evidence, but, as I walked along a rice dike, I was pleased to see an occasional least bittern, legs dangling as it fluttered over a wall of reeds to escape my presence. Other wading birds, including herons, egrets, and ibises, either stood like sentinels at gateways to watercourses or slowly, majestically, took wing.

But it was the next day at cypress-shrouded Blake's Reserve that I somehow sensed both past and present and the full meaning of what this gift might mean to America. The large wading birds were through nesting and no longer very much in evidence. On the other hand, ospreys were almost constantly overhead, anhingas sunned themselves on dead snags, and every now and then a summer duck (wood duck) lifted its voice out of a dark recess amid the cypress. Here was a timelessness and beauty that transcended the disturbing events of our time. So long as there are places like this, man will find serenity, and hard-pressed forms of wildlife will live into another century. Blake's Reserve was a haven for the herons and egrets in their time of need. They have been joined by comparative newcomers to the low country such as the glossy ibis and cattle egret. And, as in the past, there are ospreys and bald eagles nesting within

the Reserve. I was told by Mr. Cody that thirty pairs of ospreys and three pairs of bald eagles nest there. The red-cockaded woodpecker roams the pine woods outside the Reserve, and Mississippi and swallow-tailed kites have been seen in increasing numbers throughout the Santee tract in recent years. The same can be said of the alligator which has responded well to recent protective measures by state and federal governments on its behalf.

As my skiff glided through the dark cypress-stained waters, a sudden burst of sunlight broke through the thunderheads that had been gathering that morning. The light brought out the fresh greenness of the cypress foliage and changed the black water to amber. And the huge stick nests of ospreys, perched precariously at tops of dead cypress snags, loomed against the sky like over-sized mushrooms.

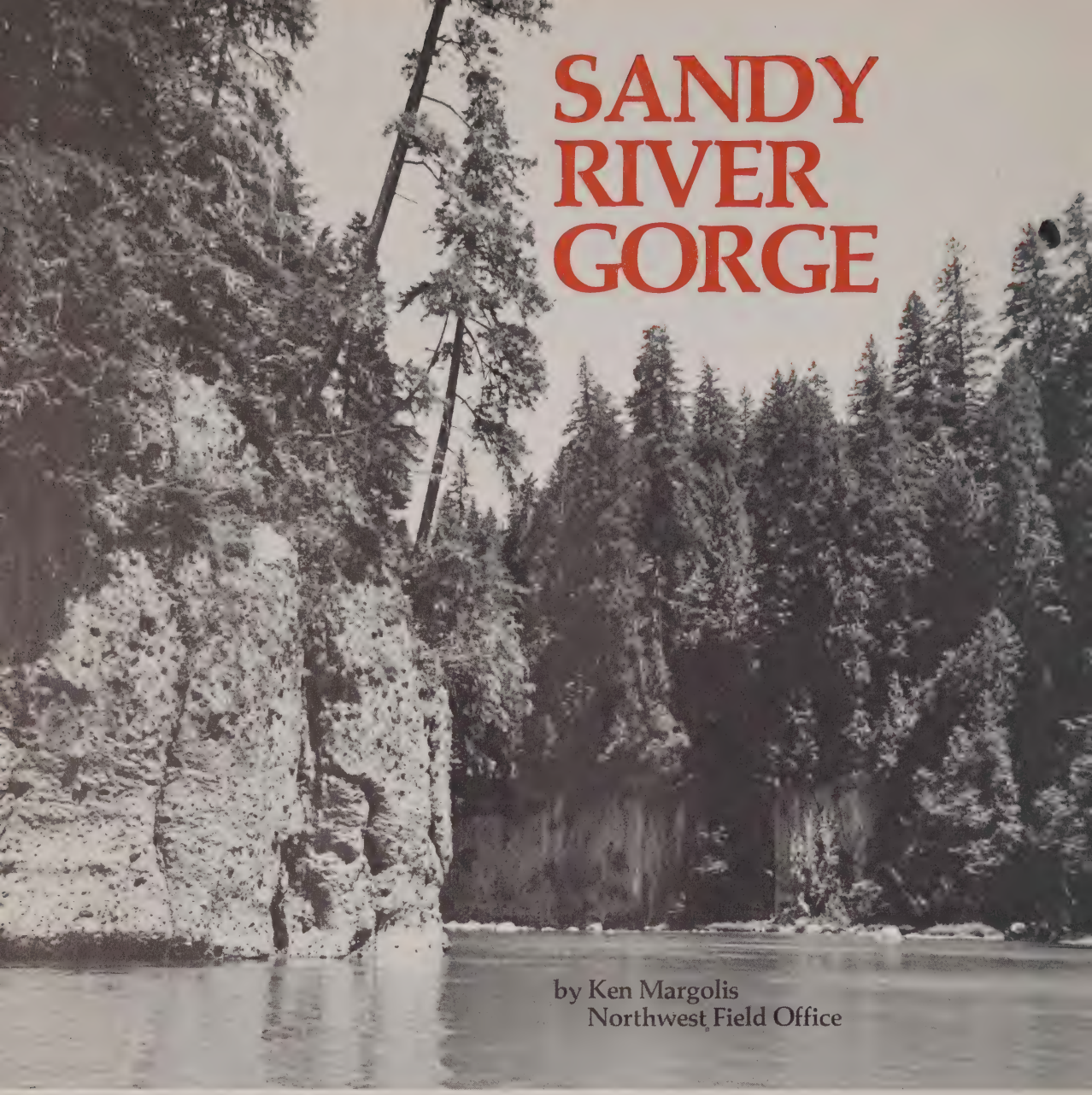
Santee Transferred

In September the Santee lands were transferred by The Nature Conservancy to the State of South Carolina. The land will be managed as a state wildlife area and is the first acquisition in a planned larger coastal reserve. Although the Conservancy will retain ownership of Blake's (Washo) Reserve, for management purposes the reserve will be leased to the state with stringent restrictions and special use protection.

As in all South Carolina state wildlife areas, access at Santee will be monitored and controlled. Tentative planning for public use at Santee includes controlled surf fishing along the 14 miles of ocean beach, interpretive trails, and general hiking trails, a canoe "trail" through the marshes, and two primitive camping areas.

Under terms of the transaction, the intent of the transfer is to "provide for the preservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the integrity and character of the ecosystem" at Santee. No alterations in the natural character of ecosystems are permitted. According to the transfer documents "no commercial development or exploitation is permitted." In the event the intent or specific conditions of the transfer are ever violated, the Santee property will return to Conservancy ownership. A use and management plan acceptable to the Conservancy is to be developed within the coming year.

A deer pauses near live oak trees draped with Spanish moss.



SANDY RIVER GORGE

by Ken Margolis
Northwest Field Office

For a stretch of approximately six miles, the Sandy River meanders through a canyon 800 feet deep, with forested bluffs rising 400 feet above the water. River otters, beavers, minks, coyotes, raccoons, and black-tailed deer leave their tracks in the moist sand by the river's edge. Elk come in winter seeking refuge between the sheltering bluffs, and cougars and black bears slip in and out of the canyon from the Larch Mountain country east of the gorge. Red fox hunt rabbits, deer mice and bushy-tailed wood rats along the forest edges on the open canyon slopes.

This area, known as the Sandy River Gorge, would be a valuable natural feature in any location; but the fact that it is twenty-five minutes from the heart of downtown Portland, Oregon, makes it a truly unique educational, scientific and recreational resource. To insure that it remains so, the Conservancy became involved several years ago in a project to preserve the entire six-mile gorge.

In 1970, two brothers and their families offered the Conservancy a generous gift of 156 acres in the heart of the gorge. Arch and Sam Diack, both prominent Portland physicians, had spent years on the Sandy, floating the river, fishing for salmon and steelhead, birding and photographing the many wildflowers found there. The Diacks donated their land on the condition that the organization would work for preservation of the entire gorge, and the Conservancy has accepted the challenge.

An additional 36 acres along a shallow part of the gorge were given to the Conservancy in 1973 by Dr. and Mrs. Milton Hyman, bringing the preserve to 192 acres.

A study of ownership patterns conducted by the Conservancy's Sandy River Gorge Committee and Northwest Field Office revealed that large parts of the gorge are already in public ownership. Most of the public land is under the stewardship of the Bureau of Land Management. BLM, working with Conservancy staff, determined that the natural values within the gorge were sufficient to justify withdrawing its holdings from potential mineral exploitation. There are county parks at either end of the gorge, and Multnomah County also owns Indian John Island just upstream from the Diack donation and within the six-mile gorge. The island, presumably named after an early inhabitant, has recently been declared by the county to be suitable only for primitive recreational use.

In 1973, after months of hearings and public testimony in which the Conservancy played a prominent role, the six-mile stretch of the Sandy was classified by the state as a Natural River Area —the most protective designation within the state system of scenic waterways. A six-mile section immediately downstream from the gorge was designated as a Scenic River Area.

Although these measures by the state are encouraging, the Natural River designation gives the state an option, but not the duty, to protect the gorge. And although its precipitous terrain has spared this reach of the Sandy from roads and intensive development, advanced construction technology of recent years has placed the gorge in jeopardy. To insure that the gorge remains a unique natural area, the Conservancy has obligated itself to purchase an additional 175 acres within the area. These purchases will tie Conservancy land to both ends of the major BLM holding, and will create a four-mile "public interest" strip along the crucial east side of the river. By raising the necessary $120,000 through public subscription, the Conservancy can demonstrate the ongoing public interest in the area, and thus the desirability for the state to step in and afford additional protection when, and if, that becomes necessary. The Northwest Office already has informal assurances from the state that the Conservancy campaign in the gorge will make it easier for the state to extend its protection when the time comes.

A deer walks along the rocky banks of the Sandy.

The Sandy River is an ideal spot for anglers, swimmers, and floaters.

The Sandy is rated as one of the cleanest streams in Oregon.

The Sandy River Gorge has been a favorite spot for anglers, swimmers, birders and floaters for decades. Sixty years ago parts of the gorge were logged, and at one time an electric railroad ran along the west bank carrying supplies and workers to the Bull Run Power Project. Now the trees have grown back in; the tracks from the railroad are gone, and the old trackbed makes a delightful pathway along the side of the gorge.

The natural forces of rain, wind and erosion generated by the active river, shifting in its bed, create an environment of surprising complexity. Sandbar willow communities occupy the places most exposed to the flowing river. A little higher, black cottonwood and its floodplain associates are prevalent. A distinctive cold air drainage pattern along the floor of the gorge helps sustain lodgepole pine and firs usually found at higher elevations.

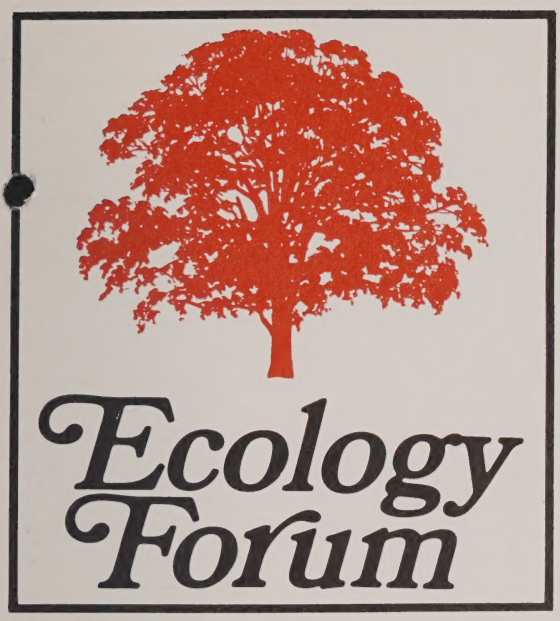
In summer on the open cobblestone and gravel beaches left by the shifting river, the spotted sandpiper, killdeer and nighthawk nest. When the mist is rising from the river at dawn, the great blue heron leaves his night time fishing and flies to his daytime perch in a tall fir on the bluff. Ospreys, bald eagles, turkey vultures and red-tailed hawks fly the day patrol over the Sandy River. Cedar waxwings come in family groups to the cedar snag leaning over the river, and from this convenient perch they dash out to snap up hatching caddis flies as they emerge from the river pool. The song of the water ouzel is the brightest sound during winter days, but at other times one can hear the hooting of the blue grouse and the drum of ruffed grouse, or the hammering of the pileated woodpecker chiseling for grubs.

Since the establishment of the Conservancy preserve, educational and scientific use of the area has increased tremendously. Tom McCallister, Chairman of the Sandy River Gorge Management Committee (whose thorough knowledge of the Sandy provides the basis for much of the description in this story), has brought students from the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry to the preserve for several summers in a row, to study the area's flora and fauna and to cut a system of loop trails which take the visitor through the shadowy groves of fir, the lush ferns, the secret mushroom beds.

Just last year, Reed College recognized the educational usefulness of the gorge by establishing an annual scholarship which will allow a student from the life sciences to study some biological aspects of the gorge. The preserve has also recently been selected as an air pollution monitor point.

The Diacks have retained their interest in the gorge. Over the years, they have brought hundreds of people into the gorge to share its beauty. Arch Diack might be found any Saturday or Sunday roaming the gorge with camera or sketch pad. And if there is ever any threat to the river's integrity, the first letter on the desk of the appropriate officials will be from Arch. He played major roles in the Sandy's natural river designation by the state, in the decision that Indian John Island be used only for primitive, non-developed recreation, and he is now making sure that the Department of Environmental Quality guards the water quality of the Sandy, now rated as one of the cleanest streams in the state.

The Sandy River Gorge is one of the beautiful examples of "those things of nature upon which man cannot improve." But we can use those places, as the Conservancy is using its preserve, to study, to learn, and to refresh our spirits. It is reassuring to know that, for this and future generations, the Sandy River Gorge will remain a place of vigorous natural beauty.



No. 13
by John W. Humke

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESERVING ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Nature Conservancy has begun a six-month study which will lead to a series of recommendations on how best to protect the nation's areas of critical ecological importance. The study is being undertaken for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Funds for the study are being provided by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service.

In announcing the study, Assistant Secretary Nathaniel P. Reed said, "Man's activities are rapidly and severely modifying the natural landscape. The loss of segments of the natural world and the effect of that loss on the environmental health of the nation should be of great concern to all decision makers. We are at a critical point in the process of land change in this country. The Nature Conservancy/Interior study will let us look a little more clearly at one aspect of the problem." Conservancy President Patrick F. Noonan commented on the study as follows: "It is vital today for us to realize that ecological factors, including the necessity to maintain the diversity of life forms on earth, must be fully considered in daily resource use decisions. We hope that the study will be a building block toward achieving the awareness and protection needed for the nation's natural areas." To meet this challenge by coming up with significant recommendations by February 1, 1974, the Conservancy's special Interior Study task force has divided the study into a six step program.

The first step will be to research the natural areas movement as it presently operates and draft an interim "existing situation" report. Using various survey techniques, the task force will describe aspects of the natural areas programs of a selected group of federal and state agencies and of national and state level private conservation organizations. The survey will emphasize the four main concerns of natural area preservation: inventory and identification, acquisition and preservation, management and use, and funding for these activities. It will look at the major objectives and techniques of existing programs, levels of accomplishment with existing resources, and the authority, programs and resources to meet projected natural area preservation needs.

The second step will be to draft preliminary recommendations. To do this the task force will consider the results of the survey and call upon the considerable experience and expertise of many of the Conservancy's senior staff and seasoned volunteers as well as a select group of outside advisors. While the exact nature of these preliminary recommendations is not known at this time, it is anticipated that they will include such matters as improving methodology, coverage and coordination of natural area surveys; evaluating and encouraging the use of such natural area protection devices as land use regulation, designation, dedication and acquisition; effective levels of natural area ownership and management based on determinations of responsible stewardship and meaningful scientific, educational and related use programs; the funding needs of various segments of the natural areas movement; and steps to insure coordination and efficiency among the various agencies and organizations active in natural area preservation.

Upon completion of steps one and two in mid-November, the Conservancy will host a major natural areas conference. The interim existing situation report and the preliminary recommendations will be reviewed and discussed by approximately 50 individuals representing various governmental and private natural areas programs as well as persons with valuable governmental and programatic experience from other organizations. The primary purpose of the conference is to transform what will be, at this point, essentially Conservancy recommendations into those which reflect the experience and insights of a broad spectrum of natural areas movement leaders, as well as of individuals

who have been effective in developing and successfully implementing programs in similar areas. Secondary purposes of the conference will be to build an initial base of support for implementing the final recommendations and to collect additional information for the existing situation report.

Steps four and five follow the conference and involve the preparation of a final existing situation report and the conference proceedings. These two documents, which should serve as major natural areas movement references for several years, will be printed and made available to the agencies and organizations reported in the survey, the participants at the conference, and other interested persons. More important, however, they will serve as the basis and justification for the final recommendations to the Department of the Interior.

Writing the final recommendations will be step six. The contract the Conservancy entered into with the Department of Interior requires that the recommendations shall "propose to the government a natural area preservation program that would be compatible with companion programs for the preservation of other features in the landscape (historic, archaeological, critical areas, etc.)." It is the intent of the special task force, and indeed the whole Conservancy, to do this; but we also hope to accomplish more.

The Conservancy undertook this activity with the belief that it offered us a real opportunity to broaden the base of and increase the commitment to natural area preservation in this country. But the series of reports and recommendations that will result from the study are merely an important step in a process with which the Conservancy has been advancing since its inception. Our goals can be served only by significantly increasing the quality and quantity of preserved natural areas. The study results alone will not do this; it is the commitment with which we and others carry this process into the future that will determine if we will ultimately achieve our basic objectives.

Give a gift for all seasons

This Christmas, give a membership in The Nature Conservancy.
An annual membership includes a year's subscription to the *News*, as well as publications issued by the local chapter.
An attractive card, signed as you specify, announces each gift membership. To order, write to the Membership Department at the National Office.
Besides giving an enjoyable gift that lasts all year, you will be helping the Conservancy grow.

VIRGINIA V. SMILEY

Virginia Smiley, a dedicated Conservancy advocate and a trustee of the Eastern New York Chapter, passed away during late summer. Mrs. Smiley, a member of a number of conservation organizations and a principal of the Mohonk Trust, was a well-known and widely admired author and naturalist who combined a sure knowledge of the natural world with the sensitive appreciation of a poet.

DR. GEORGE E. HUDSON

George E. Hudson, Chairman of the Inland Empire Chapter, died during the past summer. Dr. Hudson, a professor of botany at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, was a no-nonsense, devoted conservationist and veteran of many years of difficult conservation fights. In addition to his careful stewardship of the Rose Creek Preserve and his work with the Conservancy, Dr. Hudson was a leader in the Washington Environmental Council.

CONSERVANCY RESIGNS

The Nature Conservancy has resigned from the National Advisory Council of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. (KAB), the solid waste and litter group. The Conservancy had been appointed to the Council a number of years ago and had never taken an active part in Council activities. In the letter of resignation to KAB, which boasts on its governing board key representatives of the beverage and container industries, the Conservancy cited lack of time and manpower as prohibitions to playing an advisory role for Keep America Beautiful. Also noted were differences in program goals between the two organizations.

TNC BOOK IN PROGRESS

For the last three years. Tim Loomis and Sue Bournique, two young and talented photographers, have photographed about 40 Conservancy projects. Their travels have taken them from the lush green rain forests of Hawaii to the frosted white Maine coast in winter. Underwritten by special funding, the photographers have been working to produce illustrations for what will become a Conservancy book attractively telling the story of "Why Save Land?" Discussions are still underway as to the book's final format and who its author or authors will be. Negotiations have begun with a publisher but without any firm commitments being made. TNC members and *News* readers will be kept informed on progress toward publication of the Conservancy's first book.

1975 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1975 Annual Meeting is tentatively set for Washington, D.C., on April 26. Details will be announced in the Winter issue of the *News*.

The salt marshes, pockets of virgin growth, natural flyways of migratory birds, the last retreats of endangered animals . . . let it be.

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